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Action

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Info

FROM: Caracas

SS

TO: Secretary of State

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NO: 500, October 23, 6 p.m.

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Vast majority Venezuelans appear wholeheartedly back President Betancourt's strong support US initiative on Cuba. While there some minor demonstrations this morning at Central University, city as whole has had "business as usual" atmosphere. Embassy (and other USG installations) continue under reinforced guard. Consulate Maracaibo reported this morning that city calm.

President met with AD, COPEI, and CTV leaders this morning and with military this afternoon. Embassy has no report as yet re results. Foreign Minister publicly supported US position in statement today.

RMR

Military all ranks and services "exuberant" and oft-stated remark was "at last".

AD leaders have told Embassy officers Kennedy speech was "very good", "magnificent" and that 90 percent Venezuelans pleased with it. One AD Senator on own initiative called Embassy officer to state extreme left contact had expressed knowledge of hemisphere wide Communist party all out attack on US interests "when signal given" and claimed there no nuclear weapons on Cuba yet but that Soviet convoy now on way with them.

Cuban exile leaders unanimous in their "glee" over US program exile radio station has been broadcasting speech continuously all day. Several exile leaders have already left for meeting

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-2- 500, October 23, 6 p.m. from Caracas

with Miami Council.

Embassy telephone operator has received considerable number calls, all but five of which were laudatory.

Armed forces not on alert and no plans do so unless local situation requires. (They have just been restored normal duty status following two weeks partial and full alert.)

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Note: Relayed Polad Cincarib. and Polad Cinciant, 10/23/62.

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